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HOMEMAKERS' CHAT

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U. S. DEPARTMENT
OF AGRICULTURE
OFFICE OF INFORMATION

Monday, September 4, 1944

Subject: "MARMALADES AND RELISHES FROM TOMATOES" Information from the Bureau of Human Nutrition and Home Economics.

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Won't be long now until the first cool days of autumn are here. Days that suggest the pungent fragrance of spicy preserves and marmalades, relishes and pickles.

If tomatoes are plentiful at your place, either from your garden or the local market, and if your supply of canning sugar will permit, use tomatoes to fill the gaps in the marmalade and relish sections of the pantry shelf.

Before the war, when we spoke of tomato preserves, we usually thought of plump, little, yellow tomatoes flavored with a rind of lemon peel and ginger root. They are delicious. But they take lots of sugar. Three-fourths a pound to each pound of tomatoes.

In these days of rationing, we try to make our canning sugar go further. There are other good spreads that can be made from tomatoes. Food specialists of the Bureau of Home Economics of the U.S. Department of Agriculture suggest tomato marmalade and tomato-apple butter. You'll find recipes for these spreads in a leaflet on tomatoes, which you can get by writing the Department of Agriculture.

For the marmalade, you may use either ripe or green tomatoes, including the late green tomatoes caught by the first light frost.

Just a hint about those green tomatoes. The mature greens - those almost ready to turn - will ripen at a cool room temperature in either sunlight or shade. Spread them out in the cellar or woodshed or on a protected porch. Or you may line them up on the window sill if the room's not too warm.

Immature green tomatoes won't ripen. And they won't keep long. So plan to preserve or cook them soon after picking.

Food specialists in the Department of Agriculture also suggest you can combine tomatoes with tart apples to make green tomato mincemeat. This may come in handy later for cookies or fruit cake. As you would expect, this mincemeat is highly spiced and it has the traditional mincemeat ingredients or raisins and either citron, lemon or orange peel. It may be made entirely with brown sugar or you may wish to use half brown and half granulated sugar. To give it richness, you'll add nuts when you make the cookies and fruit cake.

If you make tomato-apple butter, you can figure on getting about 3 pints of butter from two quarts of sliced tomatoes and a quart and a half of apples.

Chances are, if your garden is bearing well now, you'll have a dozen or so extra tomatoes on hand every few days. You can whet the family appetite with an uncooked ripe tomato relish that's good for use right now. It's easy to prepare and may be kept in the ice box for two or three weeks. Two quarts of tomatoes combined with chopped celery, onion and green pepper make about three pints of relish. It's flavored with mustard seed, nutmeg, cinnamon, and cloves.

Green tomatoes may be combined with cabbage, onions and green pepper to make an uncooked chow chow that's very good with cold meats. Horseradish gives this relish a tangy flavor. The chow chow should be kept in the refrigerator.

Green tomato relish has ingredients somewhat similar to piccalilli but it requires a half a cup less sugar and calls for more vinegar.

Which reminds me...if you're using pickles and relish recipes from your grandmother's cookbook, you may find the results are apt to be more sour than you remembered them in the old days. Reason for this is the strength of standard vinegar has been increased in the last 15 or 20 years.

And now here are a few suggestions to keep in mind when you're making tomato relishes and marmalades. Use only fresh, good quality food.

The food specialists recommend pure granulated salt for the best results in relishes and pickles. They say you may not get as good results from table salt because of the carbonates or bicarbonates of sodium, calcium or magnesium which have been added to table salt to keep it from lumping. You can, however, use table salt, of course.

One of the important ingredients in a kettle of relish is the spice. Your recipe may call for whole spice or ground ones. If it calls for whole spices, be sure that the clean, white cloth you use for the spice bag is large enough to let the juices circulate freely and draw out the flavor.

Of course, you'll cook your tomato relishes in enamel, aluminum or stainless steel kettles. Pickling liquids must not be cooked in copper or iron kettles.

And if you want some up-to-date recipes on ways of preparing tomato relishes and marmalades, tomato-apple butter and mincemeat, you'll find them in the leaflet, "Tomatoes - On your table". You can get a copy by writing the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

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